

VOL. III

No. 3

## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

You will notice that this issue of the FLAME is a departure from our usual format in that there is little in the way of factual or objective information. The reason for this is, in the editor's view, more of a plus than is the lack of this kind of information a minus.

This is the first time in at least a year that the FLAME has truly been a product of collective efforts. Most of the time the FLAME is a one-man effort in which the editor does most or all of the articles, researches all of the objective information, and must supplement the poetry section with his own poems in order to fill up the poetry page. It is a work of love but work that is often tedious.

This time, however, we have a commentary from a Sister who is locked up in the women's prison at York, Nebraska; poems from two Sisters in Omaha and one in Colorado Springs, Colorado; and poems from a Brother here at the Nebraska Pen and from a Brother in the Canon City, Colorado joint. This is seen as a beautiful development, hopefully a lasting one. Should it continue, we will expand upon the size of the FLAME.

At the present time, while two-hundred copies of each issue are distributed (primarily to prisoners), we have but about six paying subscribers. Many more than this number of you on the outside receive or have received the FLAME. We send it to people just because it is requested because we know that there are hard times going down out there. But we need your support so that we can afford to reach more people, so that we can improve the appearance (photographs, better type, etc.) of the FLAME, etc.

Knowledge and understanding are worth investing in. --Editor/David L. Rice

July

1982

## BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL

"Black is beautiful" is a phrase that is perhaps the most important Black People have uttered since I have been alive. But it is an empty, shallow, meaningless group of words if that is all we have to say. Black can only be truly beautiful if we can make ourselves understand the true meaning of "beauty."

We are beautiful when we are smart enough to understand the tools and technology, as well as methodology, of making power work for us. We are beautiful when we are knowledgeable enough to understand our own good points and limitations and those of others and expect no more of them than they are capable of giving, but demand that which they are capable. We are beautiful when we make our homes, our community, our city, our nation a better place to live in, not just for us but for everybody. We are beautiful so long as we maintain the human dignity and integrity to resolve that we will never perpetrate on another group of people the offenses that have been inflicted upon us. We are beautiful when we are honest with ourselves and those around us about every phase and facet of our blackness.

Now some of you might not agree with what I am saying to you, but the truth always hurts those we love most; and I love my "Black People" as you should. If you're not willing to wave the Red, White, and Blue because you think it's a ridiculous idea that America is beautiful, just think how we must look waving our Red, Black, and Green flag and how we must sound saying "Black is beautiful" unless Black people in this country are willing to put real meaning into the phrase.

Wake up, my people. It is not only what the White man did to the Black man. It

EULOGY FOR OLD BLACK MEN  
...WHO HAD POTENTIAL

Yesterday's  
young black men  
proud  
strong  
full of tomorrow's hopes  
dreams  
fortified with  
determination  
unconquered  
unchallenged  
unchanged

Not yet  
but soon to be  
worn  
down  
by those whose  
main theme in life  
is  
the taking

From those  
who have  
life's energy  
lets them think  
they had  
a chance  
to become  
better  
than the fathers  
whose manhood  
conceived them

Like something out  
of an old  
BLACK  
WHITE  
movie  
Duddly-Do-White  
always  
gets his man  
Charlie

Little boy  
loses  
the game once  
again  
he's down for the count

1  
2  
3

1  
2  
3  
you're out  
of a game  
rigged against you from  
the start

L Yesterday's boy  
I clothed in hopes  
F grows ancient and tired  
stripping himself naked  
of tomorrows.

E --Ruth Jones  
(Omaha)

BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL(cont.)

R is also what the Black man failed to  
H do for himself.

Y So hear me, my Brothers and Sisters.  
T Don't just be Black and proud and leave  
H it at that. Be a man or a woman. That  
M is what counts. Do something for your-  
S self, something on your own. Be deter-  
mined to pay your own way. Be willing  
to look for help and don't be too  
proud to take good advice from anyone,  
wheter it's a he or a she, Black or  
White. We should know better than any-  
one that survival is a hard thing.

Let your word be your bond, be right,  
be dignified, maintain composure, be  
all the things it takes to be a good  
person. The Creator, Allah, has ex-  
horted us to do onto others as we would  
have them do onto us. I know from  
experience what it takes to make it  
and what it takes to fail. Learn that  
there are no cheap and easy shortcuts  
to success in life, that shortcuts  
lead to jails and prisons.

Let us take each other by the hand and  
hold our heads high and say, with mea-  
ning, that we are Black, that we are  
beautiful, and that we are definitely  
proud. If we can but be accepted as  
human beings by society, we can make  
it the rest of the way by ourselves.

As Salaam Aliakum(Peace be onto you.)

--Arisah Clark(York, NE.)

### LET NIGHT CARESS ME

I wanna bask in the glory of your sun  
and be what I was born to be  
Free!

As in my heart and soul  
on the outside  
I wanna be

I want to be in motion  
like a bird  
all I need are my wings  
I'll fly you to a better place  
where the sun shines bright  
and the magnificence  
makes us small

Oh spirit be free  
like you want to be!

The moon's romance  
will help us through  
the night  
and the stars  
shining bright!

We love you chil'  
we want you to ride into  
the forever, forever land  
in a warm breeze  
with the sun shining in you eye  
open wide and its shining through  
Us gentle folks will wear the crown  
of our new day

Like a mountain  
we were meant to be  
all a part of the scheme of things

I wanna bask in the glory of your sun  
and be  
And as the sun sets  
I wanna wrap my legs around the moon  
and kiss the stars

And Let Night Caress Me  
And Let Night Caress Me.

--Stephanie Partridge  
(Omaha)

### MY POETIC CONFESSION

i am "totally" a black woman  
hooked on the beauty of motherhood  
the principles of fatherhood  
and the need of a good familyhood

hooked with thoughts  
thoughts i'm reluctant to put on paper  
thoughts that are seemingly  
insane to others  
but profound in the poetic world

L yes, they say i am a poet  
I so i proudly wear the brand  
I sometimes i rise early in the morning  
F just to scribble  
F metaphoric words on paper  
often with a rhythm  
E of uncontrollable rhyme  
sometimes i scribble  
until day breaks through  
my foggy windows  
R windows i no longer have time  
to keep crystal clean  
H sometimes i scribble  
until my little friends from kentucky  
Y land on my front lawn--  
they are the blackbirds  
T who refuse to become victims  
of extinction  
H i look at them and i see  
black sisters fighting sterilization  
M yes, we struggle like the blackbirds  
in the same situation  
S

i often find my body cuddled  
in a corner of blind darkness  
just cuddled there  
because of man's abrupt and blight  
depraved love  
sometimes i'm weird--so entranced  
once i found my shoe in the refrigerator  
and cookies in the washer

Sometimes i'm weird--  
like a childish demon  
would love to stuff ladybugs  
down the white collars  
of phony revolutionaries  
and i'd love to pour cockroach juice  
in the fancy cocktails  
of the bourgeois slaves  
who are too conformed  
to see the difference between  
white assets and black liabilities

sometimes i'm weird--shouted  
"hallelujah!"  
when the turks gobbled up the crackers  
and in the midst of rocky-mountain  
hillbillies  
i threw a faraway kiss to mozambique

sometimes i'm weird--like  
 a floating angel  
 in love with life, beauty, and nature  
 sometimes wishing i were immortal  
 just to see if my black spirit  
 would be strong enough to guard  
 the caskets of the righteous living  
 and the graves of the righteous dead  
 and when i find my plight  
 achingly depressive  
 i pray you'll understand.

--Nilene(Omodele Adeoti)  
 Foxworth

### FLIGHTLESS

Where am I from?  
 I am from the opposite of the wind  
 I float easily on a breeze  
 But am now still  
 with clipped wings

Once free, what path should I take?  
 In which direction does the wind blow?  
 I have no past or future  
 My present held immobile  
 The breeze moves on without me

Do I live?  
 So I think  
 My lungs are filled  
 The fruits of this earth fill my belly  
 sustain my life

Once I am free to fly again  
 Will I ever be as strong as before  
 or are my wings forever damaged?  
 Atrophied from lack of use?

Does a breeze come?  
 Will I soar high?  
 Will my glide be long?  
 Will I gracefully descend or plummet  
 to the ground in a tumbling heap?

Where am I from?  
 I have no past or future  
 My present held fast  
 And the breeze blows on without me.

--Al Holloway  
 (Canon City, Colorado)

### BONDAGE

Hundreds of years,  
 My people was like this.  
 Chained, raped, gagged, and tortured,  
 Slashed with a whip that did not miss.  
 As time brought about a change,  
 Master wanted to feel the pain.  
 No longer for punishment,  
 But enjoyed as personal sexual gain.  
 Today,  
 My people are still like this.  
 No pride, no dignity,  
 In carcerated and killed,  
 Slashed with injustice  
 That has not missed.  
 Will time bring about another change,  
 When master feels this new pain.  
 No longer of punishment,  
 But a personal stain.

--Dave Anderson

Note: "My Poetic Confession" is taken  
 from her book, BURY ME IN AFRICA,  
 which was published by Vantage  
 Press in 1978. The book contains  
 both a narrative account of her  
 1976 visit to Tanzania and poems.  
 If you are interested in obtain-  
 ing a copy of the Sister's book,  
 write to:

Vantage Press, Inc.  
 516 West 34th. St.  
 N.Y., N.Y. 10001

From whose book? Editor's tem-  
 porary lapse. Nilene(Omodele  
 Adeoti) Foxworth's book. Excuse  
 please.

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